

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the "Adoption Promotion and Stability Act of 1996"

May 6, 1996

Dear _____:

I am writing to express my strong support for The Adoption Promotion and Stability Act of 1996. Today, families seeking to adopt children face significant barriers, including high adoption costs, complex regulations, and outdated assumptions. I am committed to breaking down these barriers and making adoption easier. Promoting adoption is one of the most important things we can do to strengthen American families and give more children what every child in America deserves—loving parents and a healthy home. This legislation will help children in need of adoptive homes to be united with devoted parents.

My Administration has worked hard to promote adoption in general, and adoption of children with special needs in particular. We championed the Family and Medical Leave Act which enables parents to take time off to adopt a child without losing their jobs or their health insurance. We strongly supported the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act to help increase the number of adoptions by prohibiting discrimination based on race or ethnicity, and we remain committed to enforcing that law vigorously. As part of our 1993 deficit reduction package, I signed into law a provision that requires ERISA plans to provide the same health coverage for adopted children as for biological children of plan participants. We have worked to pre-

serve Federal support for adoption of children with special needs, and increased by 60 percent the number of children with special needs who have been adopted with Federal adoption assistance.

But together we can and must do more. I strongly support the adoption tax credit in this bill. It will alleviate a significant barrier to adoption and allow middle class families, for whom adoption may be prohibitively expensive, to adopt children to love and nurture. It will encourage adoption of children with special needs. It will put parents seeking to build a family through adoption on a more equal footing with other families.

I believe that the bill is consistent with the Administration's policy and my longstanding goal to end the historical bias against interracial adoptions, which too often has meant interminable waits for children to be matched with parents of the same race. The Administration also has some concerns regarding some of the provisions used to offset the cost of the bill and would like to work with the Congress on these provisions. In addition, we need to ensure that unnecessary provisions are not included in the legislation.

The Adoption Promotion and Stability Act is an important first step toward meeting the challenge of removing barriers to adoption. I look forward to working with you so that the dreams of the waiting children in this country to have permanent homes and loving families can become a reality.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard K. Armey, House majority leader; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; and Bill Archer, chairman, and Sam Gibbons, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means. This letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 6 but was not issued as a White House press release.

**Proclamation 6892—Asian/Pacific
American Heritage Month, 1996**

May 6, 1996

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Our national character has been enhanced by citizens who maintain and honor cultural values and customs brought from other lands. Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry have long been a part of that tradition, enriching the fabric of our society with their unique talents and abilities. This month provides a welcome opportunity to recognize these gifts and to celebrate the daily contributions that Asian and Pacific Americans make to our country's progress.

Every sector of American life has benefited from the extraordinary leadership of those who trace their roots back to Asia and the Pacific Island region. In the arts and sciences, the business world, law, academia, and government, these remarkable individuals have expanded our horizons, achieving exceptional success and demonstrating a dedicated belief in equal opportunity. Asian and Pacific Americans have worked to overcome challenges, often in the face of discrimination and prejudice, and have successfully embraced the opportunities of the American Dream.

As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, ready to compete in the global marketplace and strengthen our partnerships with the nations of the Pacific Rim, let us draw on the strengths added by Asian and Pacific Americans and applaud their proud legacy of service and dedication to this country.

To honor the accomplishments of Asian and Pacific Americans and to recognize their many contributions to our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 102-450, has designated the month of May as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1996 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe

this occasion with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:44 a.m., May 7, 1996]

NOTE: The proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 8.

**Statement on the Death of William
Colby**

May 6, 1996

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of former Director of Central Intelligence William Colby. Through a quarter century at the CIA, William Colby played a pivotal role in shaping our Nation's intelligence community. A dedicated public servant, he ably led the Agency through challenging times. He made tough decisions when necessary, and he was always guided by the core values of the country he loved. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends in this time of sorrow and grieving.

**Remarks at "In Performance at the
White House"**

May 6, 1996

Thank you very much. There is another benefit to you that we heard them all practicing, which is you won't have to endure our impulse sing-along night. We did that yesterday. [*Laughter*]

The two artists with us tonight are classic examples of the splendid, intricate tapestry of American music. Both have expanded their own musical horizons and ours as they have woven the richness of their own heritage into popular culture.

In 1993, these Grammy Award winners performed during the inaugural celebration for Hillary and me and for all of America. They were truly a highlight of that extraor-